Vanord Farm:
Riparian Buffer

The Vanord Farm, owned by Barry Vanord and family, is located just outside of Sugar Grove. The Vanord Farm raises dairy heifers on approximately 40 acres of pasture and 50 acres of cropland. The pasture is managed through rotational grazing. The basic principle of rotational grazing is to divide a large pasture up into smaller paddocks, and alternately graze and rest the paddocks. This system allows for better distribution of animal nutrients and for plant regrowth after grazing.

As is the case on many farms, there is a stream that runs through the pasture. Depending on how the stream is treated, it can either be an asset or a detriment to the grazing system. Often times, animals are allowed free access to the stream corridors causing streambank erosion, polluting of the water, and destruction of the riparian buffer. However, if the stream is protected through streambank fencing and stabilized crossings, it can be an asset to the overall grazing system. A stable, protected stream corridor reduces soil erosion, improves water quality, and provides wildlife habitat.

On the Vanord Farm, an unnamed tributary to Stillwater Creek runs through the pasture. In 2006 Mr. Vanord enrolled into the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to fence out the stream and protect the riparian buffer. This project included several conservation practices to protect the stream corridor while allowing for continued grazing.

The practices included in this project were:

- 4000' streambank fencing
- 8.4 ac. riparian buffer
- 8.4 ac. tree planting
- 1 stream crossing
- 660' pipeline
- 4 watering hydrants

The streambank fencing will eliminate animal access from the stream corridor, except for the area which has been stabilized for animal crossing. Because the fencing excluded the animals from their drinking water, an alternate system was established with pipeline and hydrants which is connected to a water supply at the barn. A tree planting was also completed in the buffer area. The species selected for the planting focused both on streambank stabilization and wildlife habitat.

The Cropland Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a federal-state natural resource conservation program that addresses agriculturally related environmental issues. Under CREP, participants receive financial incentives from USDA's Farm Service Agency to voluntarily enroll fragile farmland in the program

Riparian buffer which included a tree planting and fencing

for 10-15 years. Participants remove unsuitable cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to buffer practices with native grasses, forbs, shrubs, trees and wetlands. The main goals of these practices are to reduce soil erosion and provide wildlife habitat.

Young tree planted in the riparian buffer starting to grow above the protective tree tube

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